

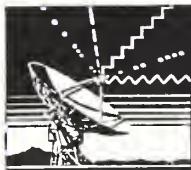
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# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2721

July 7, 1995

**ADDITIONAL DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS** -- More deficiency payments are on the way for barley and oats producers. USDA officials say about \$5.7 million in deficiency payments will go to eligible barley and oats producers who took part in 1994 USDA farm programs. Deficiency payments are made when the national weighted average market prices are below target price levels. That happened in 1994. After deducting the deficiency payment already received, barley producers will receive a penny a bushel more, bringing the net deficiency payment up to \$.53 per bushel. Oats producers will receive an additional four cents, for a final deficiency payment rate of \$.23 per bushel for oats. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

**STORAGE PAYMENTS STOP FOR SORGHUM** -- Producers who have grain sorghum in USDA's Farmer Owned Reserve (FOR) stopped receiving storage payments as of June 23. That's when prices reached the stop payment level. As required by law, whenever the market price for grain sorghum meets or beats 95 percent of the established target price of \$2.61 per bushel, storage payments must stop. That's what happened on June 23 when the five-day average price went above the 95 percent mark of \$2.48 per bushel. Nonpayment will continue until the price has been below the 95 percent rate for more than 90 consecutive days. Pledged as collateral for FOR loans, there were 3.3 million bushels of grain sorghum in the Farmer Owned Reserve in June. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

**LESS MEANS MORE** -- The number of people participating in the Food Stamp Program during April dropped by almost one million people from the same time a year ago. That's the ninth consecutive month that fewer Americans received food stamps than in the same month a year earlier. USDA Under Secretary Ellen Haas says, "As the number of people receiving food stamps continues to drop, it is clear that the pattern of recession-driven growth has ended and that food stamp participation is falling in response to the strengthening economy." Historically, participation in the program contracts when the economy is growing and expands to meet increased need when the economy is in recession. Contact: Murray Rapp (703) 305-2039.

**USDA TARGETS EXPORT PROGRAMS** -- To help exporters of U.S. agricultural commodities compete on the world market, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced three-month interim allocations under two export programs. Temporary allocations are for the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP). Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman says these temporary allocations are necessary while USDA considers how to reform the programs in light of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. He says, "Our goal is to put U.S. farmers and exporters in the most competitive position possible." These allocations will be valid through September 30, 1995. Contact: Glenn Kaup (202) 720-3329.

**PRICES ARE THE SAME, OR ARE THEY?** -- Overall prices paid to farmers for their products haven't changed, according to USDA statisticians. In a USDA Agricultural Prices report, the All Farm Products Index of Prices Received in June was unchanged from May. But the prices for individual products did change. Price declines for lettuce, strawberries, milk and peaches in May more than offset gains for tomatoes, hogs, corn and wheat. The seasonal change in the mix of commodities meant higher marketings of wheat, grapes, hay and cantaloupes and lower marketings of oranges, cattle, cotton and strawberries. The June index is also unchanged from last year. **Contact:** Herb Vanderberry (202) 720-5446.

**STILL ON THE LINE** -- Ten years ago, staff of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline began answering phones to help consumers with food safety concerns. Acting Hotline Director Bessie Berry estimates the toll-free service has handled 850,000 calls concerning food safety since service began. Last year alone, hotline staffers answered 125,000 calls on safe storage, handling and preparation of meat, poultry and eggs. Berry says, "We're helping to safeguard the public health by making information more accessible to consumers. Many food poisoning cases can be prevented by proper handling of meat, poultry and egg products. That's why we're here." They can be reached year round, Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time. Call them at 1-800-535-4555. **Contact:** Jerry Redding (202) 720-1691.

**IMPROVING HEALTH FROM A TO ZINC** -- Physiologists at USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) are studying ways to boost plants' internal level of an amino acid that would in turn increase dietary zinc available from those plants. That would be helpful in countries where meat, the most common source of dietary zinc, is hard to come by. ARS animal physiologist William House says, "When animals or people don't have enough zinc in their diets, problems such as depressed growth of the young, slower wound healing and birthing difficulties have been observed." He also points out many of the body's metabolic processes depend on zinc. While Americans don't seem to have much trouble intaking the Recommended Dietary Allowance of zinc for adults is 12 to 15 milligrams, House says zinc deficiency is a bigger problem in most developing countries. To help meet the RDA for zinc, House says they have found they can boost zinc levels in plants by adding zinc to the soil it grows in. Adding methione (an amino acid) makes it possible for humans and animals to use more of the plant's zinc. **Contact:** Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-2514.

**NO MORE TOUGH OLD BIRD** -- USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline operators were getting more and more calls from people saying they thought their turkeys were cooked before the recommended cooking time was up. Those calls prompted a study from the National Turkey Federation and the University of Georgia, reviewed by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service microbiologists. They found new breeds of turkey are reaching market weight sooner, allowing the younger, more tender birds to be cooked faster. New cooking times have been recommended, shaving off anywhere from 15 minutes to over an hour and resulting in a juicier turkey. To be safe, USDA food safety officials are recommending the use of a meat thermometer to make sure turkeys reach an internal temperature of 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Pop-up thermometers also indicate when the turkey is fully cooked. To find out more about the new, shorter cooking times, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. **Contact:** Susan Conley (202) 720-7943.

**FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE**

**AGRICULTURE USA # 1988** -- Herbs are becoming more popular in cooking and in medicine. To explore the issue further, Brenda Curtis goes to the National Arboretum, home of the National Herb Garden, for this edition of Agriculture U.S.A. (Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary).

**CONSUMER TIME # 1467** -- A visit to the National Herb Garden. An ecosystem partnership. Water rights issues update. Fighting against hunger for better health. Cutting grass and cutting pollution. (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

**AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1980** -- Europe is a good customer of U.S. agricultural products. A cucumber of a different color. U.S. agricultural exports to China continue to increase. Checks and balances for farm program payments have long been in place. Tobacco and its role in the 1995 farm bill. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Tuesday, July 11, world agricultural supply and demand for cotton; weekly weather and crops. Wednesday, July 12, world agricultural supply and demand; cotton and wool outlook; cotton world markets and trade; Thursday, July 13, feed outlook; oil crops outlook; rice outlook; wheat outlook; hog outlook; world agricultural production; grain world markets and trade; oilseeds world market and trade; tobacco world markets and trade. Friday, July 14, agricultural prices; milk production. Tuesday, July 18, weekly weather and crops. Wednesday, July 19, farm production expenditures for 1994; Europe update. Thursday, July 20, agricultural outlook. Friday, July 21, cattle on feed; livestock slaughter; sheep; agricultural trade update. These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day.

**FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE**

**FEATURES** -- Patrick O'Leary reports on the "Insect Detectives," USDA researchers who use DNA to identify bugs.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA analyst Michael Conlin talks about effects of NAFTA on agricultural trade with Mexico. USDA meteorologist Bob Stefanski with the latest weather and crop update.

**SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:**

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHz. Monday, 11:00-11:30 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHz.

**Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.**  
**Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.**

## OFF MIKE

**COVERING WHEAT HARVEST**...in Kansas provided material for a five-part series on Ag Day TV program, reports Al Pell (Ag Day Network, South Bend, IN). Features in the series include: custom harvesters, wheat marketing process, a 5,000-acre wheat farmer, wheat harvest status report, and wheat production impact on local communities. Traveling with Al was Tim Hanlon, chief videographer. Wheat yields were down due to steady rains since early April in some parts of Kansas that caused a variety of diseases such as smut and bunt and increased problems with the grassy invader called cheat. Al related that one custom harvester had nearly a \$3 million equipment investment and a \$3,000 weekly payroll to meet. Ag Day is carried by 145 TV stations five days per week and by 57 stations on Saturdays. Ag Day is a regular user of our weekly USDA TV news feature package.

**SPOTTY WEATHER**...in Indiana means that you may see lush corn on one side of the road and fields in trouble on the other side. Charlie Blake (WIKY, Evansville, IN) says there is a special concern about lateness of crops, but farmers are still hoping for the best. It's county fair time so Charlie will be keeping his listeners in Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky up-to-date on exhibitors who already are looking forward to the Indiana State Fair in mid-August. This year's Farm Progress Show will be held in Terre Haute, September 27-28. Charlie hosts a half hour Agribusiness Review Show on Saturdays and has 4-5 segments on-the-air daily. He makes good use of our weekly radio cassette service.

**REGULAR USER**...of the radio newswire, Price Allen, called in to chat with Brenda Curtis-Heiken recently. In the background, Brenda heard the voice of colleague, Gary Crawford, on-the-air at WSEL in Portales, NM. We appreciate feedback from stations and enjoy knowing how our items are used. Let us know how we can serve you better.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director  
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